



A-1. Gilbert Stuart, American (1755–1828)

Governor John Brooks, 1820; oil on panel

Gift of Mrs. Edward T. Harrison, given in memory of her husband, Edward T. Harrison, 1965 (3370.1)

BACKGROUND:

Gilbert Stuart was the preeminent portraitist of Federal America and was well-known for his ability to infuse his likenesses with vibrancy and naturalism. Stuart studied for five years in the London studio of renowned Anglo-American painter Benjamin West. After returning to America, Stuart found immediate popularity, painting presidents, politicians, military officers, businessmen, foreign dignitaries, and socialites. Commissions were constant as he followed the route of the nation's changing capital cities—New York, Philadelphia, and Washington—and finally settled in Boston.

Professionally respected, politically recognized, and socially responsible, John Brooks (1752-1825) was a typical Stuart subject. A native of Massachusetts, Brooks was a loyal supporter of George Washington during the Revolutionary War, ultimately rising to the rank of colonel. In 1816 he became governor of Massachusetts, a position he retained for several terms.

Employing stylistic principles popular in England at the time, Stuart recorded the character of his subject with keen understanding. Brooks sits comfortably erect in uniform, hand on his sword's hilt, and meets the eye of the viewer. His confident posture and straightforward glance give the image a sense of command and bearing, and Stuart's inclusion of standard props of grand manner and portraiture—the loosely sketched column and the gold chair—lends additional stature to the sitter.

Unlike other American portraitists of the era, who produced likenesses of high polish and fine detail, Stuart introduced the fluid handling of pigment and luminous color harmonies that he learned by studying 18th century British portraiture. Instead of relying on preliminary studies, Stuart approached the canvas directly, building forms by applying pigments of rich and varied shades. In addition to animating the canvas surface, Stuart's control of brush and color also tangibly evokes the textures of the physical world—opalescent flesh, gleaming gold, transparent lace, and soft hair. Stuart further enlivened the likeness with his skilled handling of the brilliance of the sitter's uniform and the warmly toned atmosphere that envelops the background. Stuart infused this likeness of Governor John Brooks with a vitality and presence that match the immediacy and approachability suggested by the sitter's direct gaze and forthright positioning.

RELATE TO PICTURING AMERICA'S 3-B:

Look closely at this work and Gilbert Stuart's painting, *George Washington (Lansdowne Portrait)*. Observe the details of each and identify similarities and differences.

Read page 18 in the *Picturing America* guide and note any similarities between that text and the background information on this painting.

Gilbert Stuart "...worked best from the living model, laying down his colors carefully one over the other—'not mixed,' he explained, 'but shining through each other, like blood through natural skin.' [He was able to] capture [his sitters'] inner character, which he believed was reflected in their physical features."

— *Picturing America* guide, p. 18

COMPARISON QUESTIONS:

Do the complexions of John Brooks and George Washington look natural? Do the colors look mixed or laid down over one another?

What do the physical features of Brooks and Washington tell you about their inner characters?

Do you think Stuart was able to capture their personalities?

Why do you think Stuart posed these men in their surroundings the way he did?

How do their clothes compare and what does the clothing say about each of them?

What do they both carry in their left hands and what does this signify?

Why does Washington's portrait have more of a background than does the painting of Brooks?

Are there other details in the two paintings that tell you something about these men's characters, personalities, and professions?



A-2. Robert Dampier, English (1800-1874)

Kamehameha III, 1825; oil on canvas

Gift to Eliza Lefferts Cooke, Charles M. Cooke III, and Carolene Alexander Cooke Wrenn in memory of Dr. C. Montague Cooke, Jr., 1951 (1066.1)

BACKGROUND:

Robert Dampier had been a resident of Rio de Janeiro for six years when, in December 1824, he boarded the HMS *Blonde*. The ship was en route to the Hawaiian Islands, carrying the bodies of King Kamehameha II and his queen, Kamamalu, both of whom had died tragically of the measles during a visit to England. It is not known where or from whom Dampier received artistic training, but evidently he was schooled in the art of portraiture. The providential addition of Dampier as official artist to the voyage ensured the recording of events and scenes that were virtually the last look at Hawai'i before it became substantially Westernized.

The HMS *Blonde* arrived in Honolulu in 1825 at the end of what is considered the period of discovery (1778-1825). Although the first American Protestant missionaries arrived five years before his visit, and the old religious system had crumbled more than six years prior, Dampier was the last of the artist-visitors to examine, explore, and record the traditional culture of Hawai'i. Traces of European culture were evident to those on the HMS *Blonde* and were commented on in their journals and in the published narrative of the voyage. In Dampier's drawings and paintings only a few signs of change are visible: a benign-looking cannon appears behind a Hawaiian woman in one of his finest portraits, and foreign buildings of wood, stone, and adobe begin to replace those of thatch in others. Shortly after the state funeral of Kamehameha II in Honolulu on May 11, 1825, Dampier began painting portraits of the royal family, starting with young Kamehameha III and his sister Nahienaena. Both paintings are attractive state portraits and encompass elegant background vignettes of the land over which the siblings ruled.

Kamehameha III, who reigned as king of Hawai'i from 1825 to 1854, longer than any other monarch, was instrumental in Hawai'i's transition from a feudal system to a constitutional monarchy. Born in 1813 at Keauhou, Kona, he was the son of Kamehameha I and his highest ranking wife, Keopuolani. Kamehameha III was monarch in title only at the time of the visit of HMS *Blonde*; power was held by the regent, Queen Ka'ahumanu, the favorite and all-powerful widow of Kamehameha I.

In reference to this painting of Kamehameha III, Dampier noted in his diary, "I began the portrait of the King Kaukiauli. His majesty behaved tolerably well, and I contrived to make a pretty good likeness of him." The young king, also known as Kauikeaouli, is seen here holding a spear in his right hand and dressed in

one of the magnificent red-and-yellow feather robes that Dampier noted were, even at this early date, "completely laid aside" in favor of Western attire. Dampier chose to depict the king in a garden setting. A cluster of banana trees throws the young king and the feather robe into sharp relief. Honolulu Fort, next to a palm grove that shelters clusters of thatched houses, the small island across the narrow body of water, and the rising mountains behind are elements taken from the artist's sketches.

RELATE TO PICTURING AMERICA'S 3-B:

Look closely at this work and Gilbert Stuart's painting, *George Washington (Lansdowne Portrait)*. Observe the details of each and identify similarities and differences.

Read page 18 in the *Picturing America* guide and note any similarities between that text and the background information on this painting.

COMPARISON QUESTIONS:

The *Picturing America* guide says American leadership is not marked by nobility or riches. However, before Hawai'i became part of the United States, its leadership was marked by such things, for it was a monarchy. Compare leadership in a democracy to leadership in a monarchy.

How do the clothes of Washington and Kamehameha III compare? What does their clothing say about the men?

At the time Dampier painted Kamehameha III, Hawai'i was not part of the United States. What other works in *Picturing America* depict a place that was not yet part of the United States when the work was made?

If this was painted today, what might Kamehameha III be wearing and what would the landscape behind him look like?

Are there other details in the two paintings that tell you something about these men's characters, personalities, and professions?



B-1. Thomas Moran, American (1837-1926)

The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, Wyoming, 1904; oil on canvas

Gift of The Bank of Hawaii, 1970 (3701.1)

BACKGROUND:

With his spectacular landscapes depicting the wild and sublime character of the frontier territories, Thomas Moran helped shape the late 19th century perception of the American West. Moran was a veteran of several western survey expeditions and trips of his own, and he drew on his firsthand experiences of the region to paint great natural American sites such as Yosemite, Yellowstone, and the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. It was with the purchase of Moran's *The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone* (U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.), of which this is a later variant, that the U.S. Congress marked its decision in 1872 to preserve the Yellowstone region as America's first national park.

Moran believed that the memory of Yellowstone's "stupendous and remarkable manifestations of nature's forces" would remain with him forever; indeed he returned to the subject numerous times. The Academy's work by Moran is one of several variations of a view across the canyon to the lower falls of the Yellowstone River. Moran placed the viewer on the canyon's rim; the opposite side rises high on the picture plane, the 1,000-foot-deep chasm drops steeply down. The vast canyon appears in a panoramic format of awe-inspiring breadth and depth; trees and rock outcroppings in the foreground provide a sense of scale that reconfirms the grand dimensions of the gorge. As Moran depicted the ever-changing play of light on the canyon walls and craggy rock formations, he revealed the earth's glowing coloristic richness, the "beautiful tints" that the artist reportedly said were "beyond the reach of human art." Finally, in the center distance, all but enshrouded in the mists that they produce, appear the lower falls that are responsible for shaping this natural wonder.

Although Moran executed numerous detailed drawings and sketches on the spot and relied on them in the creation of works such as this, his paintings are not dryly topographical. He combined his keen eye for detail with a profound appreciation of nature's beauty and its spiritually uplifting effect. Through careful orchestration of deep space, varied atmospheric effects, striking color, and rich textures, Moran transcended mere transcription to exalt the sublimity of the wondrous site. In an age when the Transcontinental Railroad was spelling the demise of America's primeval wilderness, Moran's *The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, Wyoming* stands at the end of an indigenous landscape tradition in which the beauty and majesty of the land stood for the truth and future of the American nation.

RELATE TO PICTURING AMERICA'S 8-A:

Look closely at this work and Albert Bierstadt's painting, *Looking Down Yosemite Valley, California*. Observe the details of each and identify similarities and differences.

Read page 36 in the *Picturing America* guide and note any similarities between that text and the background information on this painting.

"American artists... have sought to explore the land's effect on our national character."

— *Picturing America* website
<http://picturingamerica.neh.gov>

COMPARISON QUESTIONS:

Do you think Moran was seeking to explore the land's effect on America's national character?

To what end did Moran and Bierstadt use the effects of light in their paintings?

What times of day do these works depict?

Both artists have glowing haze in their paintings. What effect does this achieve?

These artists lived at the same time. Do you think they might have known of each other or have been influenced by each other? Why or why not?

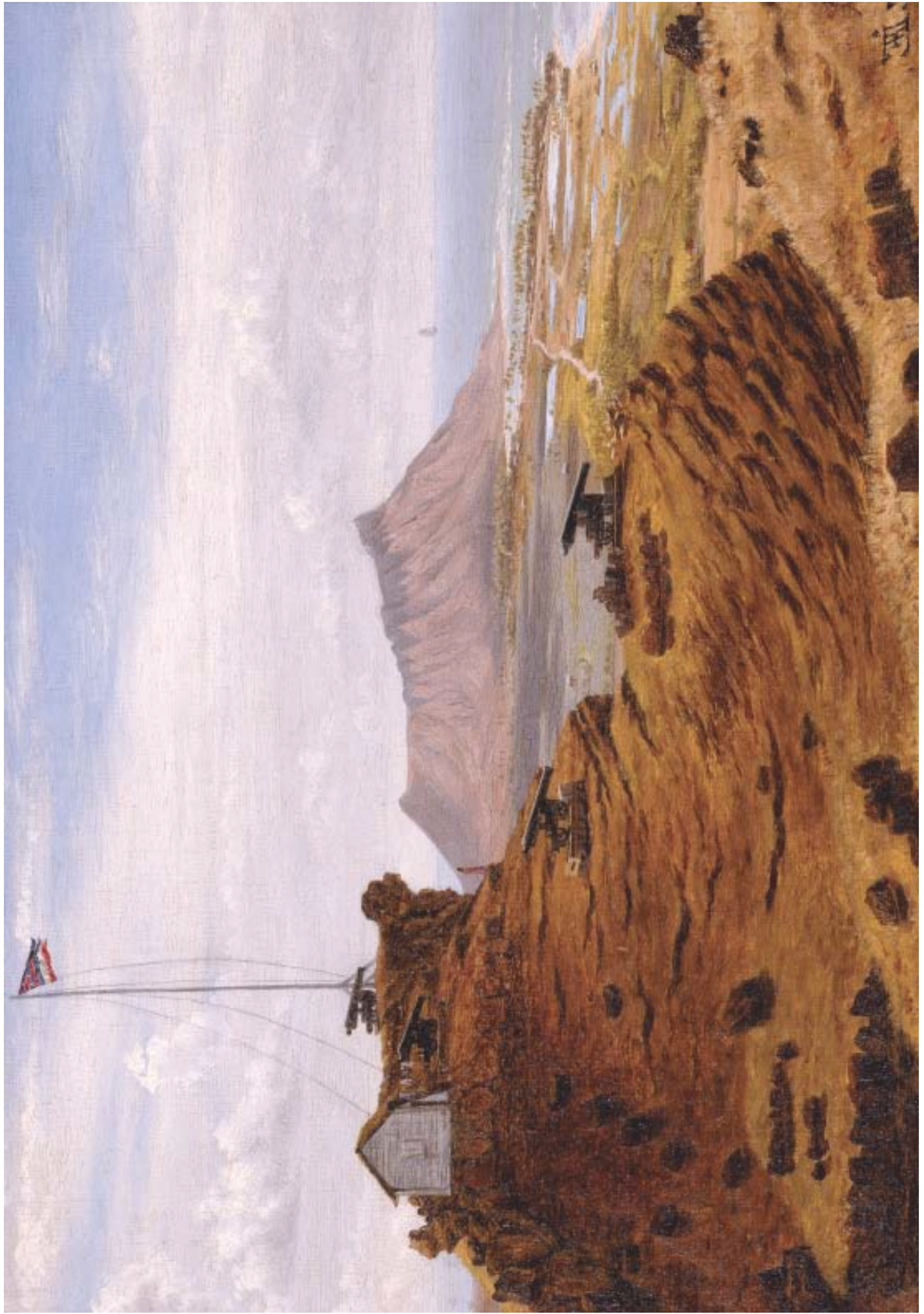
Both artists made multiple trips out west to paint. What do you think made them eager to return and paint scenes like these?

When you see these works of art, how do you feel?

Why do you think neither artist included humans in these works?

The Transcontinental Railroad was being built about the same time these artists painted the parks. How did the railroad impact the landscape and the terrain of the West?

If you were to go to this same location today, how might it have changed?



B-2. Anders Elias Jorgensen, Danish (1838-1876)

View of Honolulu from Punchbowl, 1875; oil on canvas

Gift of Hester M., Richard C., and David E., Vanderburgh in memory of Richard M. Vanderburgh, 1981 (4954.1)

BACKGROUND:

This view looks beyond the crumbling remains of old Punchbowl Fort to Waikiki and Diamond Head. The fort, actually just a battery, was put up early in the century to defend Honolulu. Its cannons, of various sizes and origins, were never called upon to fire a shot, save to salute incoming vessels or to record royal births, deaths, and marriages. The fort's only casualty was said to have been an unlucky citizen caught by the accidental discharge of a cannonball.

The Danish artist Anders Jorgensen, a resident of Oakland, California, arrived in Hawai'i in 1875 on vacation. He decided to stay awhile and, after sending for his equipment, amused himself, according to the *Hawaiian Gazette* of September 8, 1875, "by making sketches [in oil] of the scenery in and about Honolulu, which [are] remarkably correct."

The rim of Punchbowl Crater, then as now, was famous for the superb panoramic views of the town it afforded to those agile enough to scale its walls or climb a steep path to its summit. The rugged rock-strewn crater rim, the piles of cannonballs, and the tiny guardhouse and flagpole contrast strangely with the tranquility of the vista. The ribbonlike path of the road below leads past pastures, ponds, and marshy areas to the palm-fringed shores of Waikiki. In the hazy distance, Diamond Head's familiar brow overlooks the blue Pacific Ocean. From this unusual angle, one can see that Diamond Head is a volcanic crater.

Occasional signs of habitation are visible along the way, but Honolulu was a sparsely populated basin of dry, scrubby land and marshes. The area would not be developed until artesian wells were drilled a few years later. Jorgensen, like many visiting artists from around the world, came to Hawai'i and was inspired to depict a pre-industrial world that would soon disappear.

RELATE TO PICTURING AMERICA'S 8-A:

Look closely at this work and Albert Bierstadt's painting, *Looking Down Yosemite Valley, California*. Observe the details of each and identify similarities and differences.

Read page 36 in the *Picturing America* guide and note any similarities between that text and the background information on this painting.

American artists "...have sought to explore the land's effect on our national character, and to document the intersection between the untamed American wilderness and the advance of American technology and civilization."

— *Picturing America* website
<http://picturingamerica.neh.gov>

COMPARISON QUESTIONS:

Although Jorgensen was not American, do you think he was seeking to explore the land's effect on America's national character?

How, if at all, does Jorgensen's painting document the intersection between the American wilderness and the advances of American technology and civilization?

How did these artists use the effects of light in their paintings?

What times of day do these works depict?

How do the skies in the two paintings differ?

Bierstadt's painting shows no indication of humans, while Jorgensen's shows the remains of the Punchbowl battery, as well as a glimpse of the inhabitants below. How does Jorgensen's inclusion of human activity inform the viewer's perception of the scene? How would Bierstadt's painting of Yosemite differ if humans were included?

Although this artist is not considered American or Hawaiian, he is included in *Picturing Hawai'i*. Why do you think this is so?

How does this landscape compare to the view of Honolulu today?

Background from Honolulu Academy of Arts audio guide and Forbes, David. *Encounters with Paradise*. Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 1992. p. 167.



C-1. American, Adam Style

Urn-shaped Knife Case, ca. 1790–1800; mahogany and maple

Gift of Mrs. Edward T. Harrison, 1967 (3493.1)

BACKGROUND:

This urn-shaped knife case, one of a pair, is shown opened and closed. It is made of curly maple, mahogany veneer, and dark- and lightwood inlays. The body is divided into 15 sections, and the lid and domed top are intricately separated from each other by the use of a different wood. The lid of the urn slides up the central shaft until, at a certain height, two thin strips of wood spring out from the shaft and prop the top up, allowing access to the utensils. A small brass plate holds the ring for lifting the lid. Located on one of the sections is an ornamental keyhole.

Cases for storing knives first appeared in England in the 17th century. They were originally shaped in the form of a decorated box with a sloping lid and an interior compartmentalized for storing knives blade down. Forks and spoons were also stored in these containers. The Academy has such cases on display in the American Gallery.

It was not until the latter part of the 18th century that knife cases, such as the one shown here, were shaped into urns. They were made in pairs and were designed to adorn each end of a sideboard*. However, with the increasingly specialized production of the cases in the late 1700s, they were sometimes incorporated directly into the main structure of the sideboard.

The urn shape of these knife cases reflects the Neoclassical style that had recently become popular in England and in America, thanks in large part to furniture designer Robert Adam (1728-1792). Adam, an Englishman, was inspired by classical antiquity in his work. Although in post-revolutionary America it would have been considered traitorous to import furniture from England, domestic cabinetmakers and draftsmen readily copied the designs of Adam and sold their furniture to the general public. This new style of furniture based on the ancient Roman republic, whose democratic ideals shaped the United States, became a hallmark of the Federal Period.

The Buckle family of Philadelphia owned this pair of urn-shaped knife cases. Because designing and veneering these urns required great skill and much time, it is generally thought that they were the product not of a regular cabinet shop, but of a specialist.

*a sideboard is a piece of dining room furniture, fitted with cupboards and drawers, in which one would store fine table settings and utensils

RELATE TO PICTURING AMERICA'S 1-A:

Look closely at this work and *Pottery and Baskets*. Observe the details of each and identify similarities and differences.

Read pages 3-6 in the *Picturing America* guide and note any similarities between that text and the background information on this work.

COMPARISON QUESTIONS:

How and why do the functions of these storage vessels differ?

What do the objects tell you about what was happening in America at the time that they were created?

The Native American objects have decorations on them. What is their significance? Does the knife case have any ornamentation?

How do you think these objects would feel to touch? How would they feel different from one another?

How did the artists use readily available materials to make their objects? Why was it important to use local materials?

The knife cases were often meant to decorate sideboards. Would this knife case work well with the furniture in your home?

How does the urn shape reflect the ideals of the newly formed United States of America?



C-2. Hawaiian Islands

Calabash ('umeke poi and 'umeke 'ai), ca. 1700-1900; kou wood

Gift of Mrs. Anna Rice Cooke, 1931 (3063, 3061, 2050, 2053, 2056, 2082)

BACKGROUND:

Hawaiians made calabash containers and bowls to hold many objects, such as clothing and water, and, in the case of the *ali'i*, even spit and urine. However, calabashes were most commonly used as bowls for food, primarily poi, and such containers were called *'umeke*. The *'umeke* is the most typical Hawaiian bowl, perfectly round in cross-section, thin-lipped, and often tall. The bottom is heavy and usually rounded, which keeps it resting on soft mats, a pad, or sand.

Only shallow bowls were used in the rest of Polynesia. The Hawaiians used deeper bowls because they mixed their food with water, which resulted in a semi-liquid paste such as poi. Vegetable dishes were also placed in the *'umeke*. Hawaiians ate their food with their fingers.

Bowls were made from wood (in this case, *kou* wood, preferred for its soft grain), which had been soaked, often for months, in a pool. The outside was then carved down to its final shape. The inside was cut out to a depth of one to two inches, and then the diameter was reduced and the excavation carried deeper. This resulted in a series of ledges. Eventually, the bottom was reached. Then the ledges were cut out, and, to prevent food from sticking, the sides were smoothed. The smoothing was done by rubbing first with rough lava and coral, then with finer coral, then with sharkskin or the skin of a stingray. Final polishing was done with sand or earth on a pad of kapa or even leaves. Lastly, the bowl was rubbed with kukui-nut oil.

Cracked and split bowls were repaired with small, butterfly-shaped pieces of wood, called *pewa*. The *pewa* is thinner than the rest of the bowl, and it does not show on the inside of the bowl. It was fit into a depression on the bowl that was shaped over the crack. The *pewa* was always a little larger than the depression, and it was tapped in with a mallet to fit tightly. The *pewa* did not make the bowl in any way inferior, for its use implied age, and good patching indicated good craftsmanship.

'Umeke came to be deified, revered, and passed down through generations. They were literally the containers of life. *'Umeke* transferred and safeguarded spiritual power through generations. If a person's *kupuna* fed themselves through a particular *'umeke*, then passing it on would enable that person to keep in contact with his or her ancestors long after they left the material world.

RELATE TO PICTURING AMERICA'S 1-A:

Look closely at this work and *Pottery and Baskets*. Observe the details of each and identify similarities and differences.

Read pages 3-6 in the *Picturing America* guide and note any similarities between that text and the background information on this work.

COMPARISON QUESTIONS:

The pottery and baskets were made by Native Americans and the *'umeke* were made by Native Hawaiians. Compare the materials, tools, and methods used by these two groups before they had contact with Westerners. Did these groups alter their artwork after they had contact with Westerners?

Compare the westward expansion of Americans into Native American territory to that of Americans into Hawaiian land.

The Native American objects have decorations on them. What is their significance? Why is there no ornamentation on the *'umeke*?

How do the functions of the objects impact their sizes and shapes?

How do you think these objects would feel to touch? How would they feel different from one another?

Can you see where and how these *'umeke* were repaired? What materials are commonly used to repair wood today?

How did the artists use readily available materials to make their objects? Why was it important to use local materials? What tools were readily available?

Today, where are you likely to see *'umeke*? Are they in regular use in Hawai'i or in other parts of the world?